

To the Honourable the Commons of
Great Britain in Parliament as-
sembled, 533.e.24

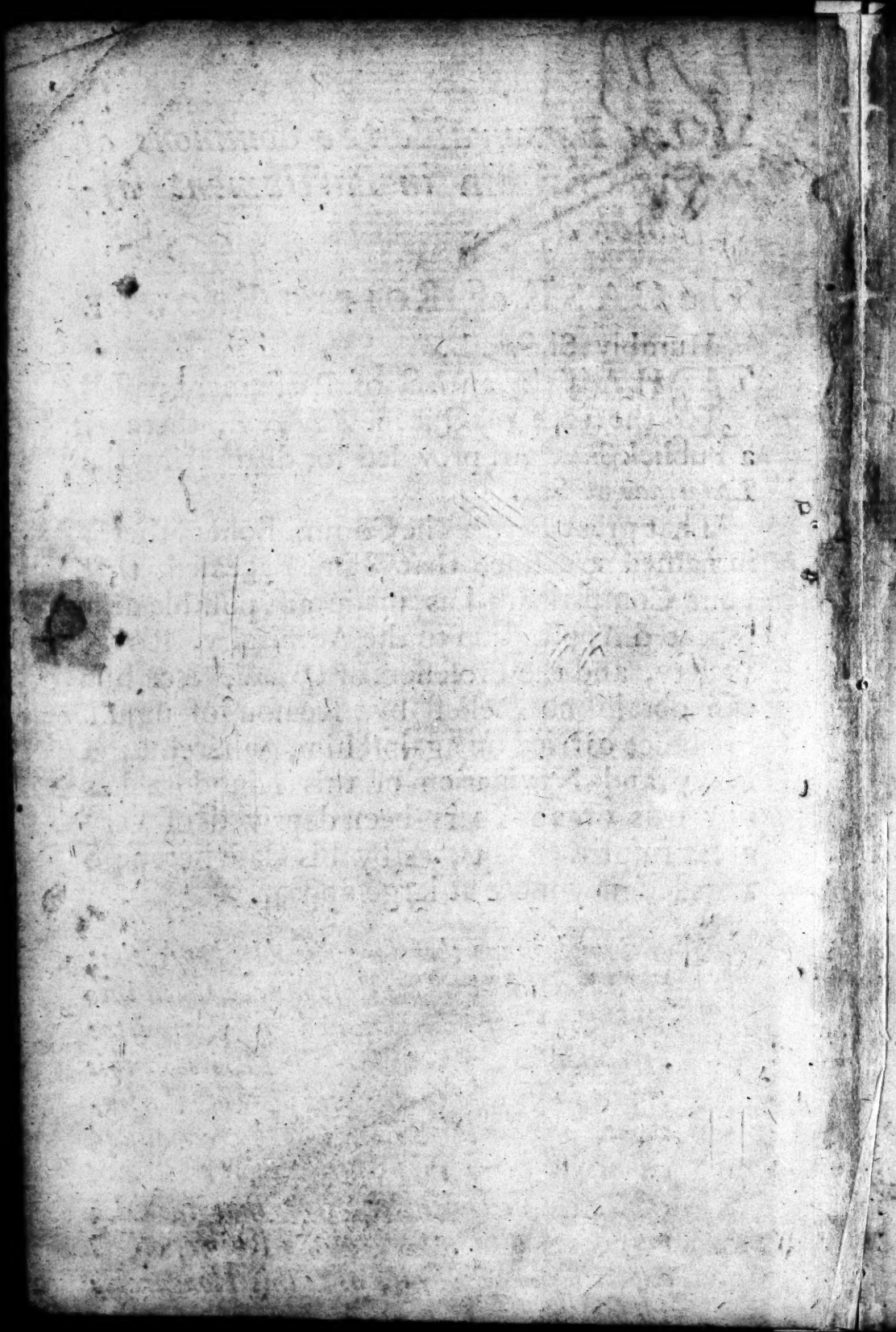
The CASE of ROBERT¹³ BROWNE

Humbly Sheweth,

THAT by an Act of Parliament passed
the 12th of Queen ANNE, there is
a Publick Reward provided for discovering the
Longitude at Sea.

That great Part of the Commissioners there-
in named are since that Time deceased, that
your Complainant has made all possible and
repeated Application to the Admiralty, Royal
Society, and the Professors of Oxford, &c. but
can obtain no Relief by Reason of unjust
Prejudice carried on against him, whereby the
Navy and Navigation of this Kingdom has
upwards of 20 Years been deprived of very
great Improvements, as by his Case hereunto
annexed may more at large appear.

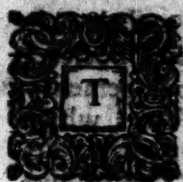
Your Complainant therefore humbly hopes that
for a Publick Good his Case may be taken into
Publick Consideration, and a Committee
appointed to examine into the Merits of this
Affair in Justice to the said Act of Parlia-
ment, and for his Relief who has exhausted
all his Substance in persuing this Work and
effectually accomplish'd it, or that the Act
may be repealed to prevent the Ruin of others
expecting Benefit by it, as to this Honourable
House shall seem meet.





The Case of **ROBERT BROWNE**, *relating to his Discovery of the Longitude at Sea, by Coelestial Observations,*

Humbly Sheweth,



THAT the Honourable the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty may remember, or be inform'd by the Minutes of the Books in that Office of my repeated Application to that Honourable Board; and, in particular, by the Copy of a Letter from that Board to Dr. Halley, as follows:

Admiralty Office, October 17th, 1729.

S I R,

I Am commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to send you the inclos'd Petition of Mr. Robert Browne, setting forth that he hath made an Improvement of the Longitude at Sea by Coelestial Observation; and desiring he may have a Reward for the same, their Lordships desire you will be at the Trouble of examining the Method he proposes, and report to them how far it may be useful to Navigation.

I am, &c.

J. BURCHETT.

I waited forthwith on Dr. Halley, and he shew'd me the said Letter and Petition, but declin'd inspecting my Improvements, in order to report to their Lordships; so that being trifled with by the Doctor and other Proficients, I apply'd to the Honourable the Commons of Great Britain in Parliament, as they may remember

by my printed Petition of 1730, deliver'd to the Members of that Honourable House, and was directed by some Members in the Lobby to apply to the Commissioners named in the Act of Parliament For providing a Reward for the Discovery of the Longitude, &c.

Whereupon I apply'd again to the Admiralty, and was advis'd from that Board to apply to the Royal Society for Testimonial; that after several Debates with Dr. Halley and other Proficients, the Doctor requir'd that I would deliver to him the Moons Places upon the Meridian before observ'd, which I did to him and the Rev. Mr. Bradley the other Professor of Oxford, from the 27th of August to the 14th of September; and again from the 24th of September to the 13th of October, 1731, for Trial and Experiment of observing the Longitude at Sea, by my Improvements.

That on the 14th of October, 1731, Dr. Halley, in Company with Mr. Bradley and other Gentlemen of the Royal Society, and several others, did publickly declare in Child's Coffee House, that if my Theory of the Moon would perform as it had done by these Experiments, I had wrought a Miracle and done more than the World, or any of them could do.

That they had desired my Theory to be Printed, and that it should be done in my Name, and be laid before the Royal Society, and they would proceed to make a Report for my Encouragement; and the Doctor desired me to give him another Moon's Places, which accordingly I did, from October 22d to November 14th, 1731, which also exceeded the other two Moons, and my Theory was printed as they desir'd and deliver'd by myself to the King's most excellent Majesty, November 21, and to the Royal Society the 28th of October, 1731, and Thanks return'd me by Sir Hans Sloan, their President, for it.

But the Doctor has ever since this Time trifled with me, and evaded any Meeting for my Encouragement; whereby I have been delay'd and kept in Suspence; by which, under my present mean Circumstances, I and my Family have suffer'd very great Want and Hardships; and I conceive the Doctor is, and has been making Application to the Admiralty and Mr. Burchett, under Pretence of improving upon me in order to deprive me of my just Reward, and obtain it himself; and is now actually Printing and about to Publish his erroneous Tables, incomparable with mine, both for Exactness and the more easy, expeditious and commodious Computing the Moon's true Place, annexing to his Observations the extravagant Errors of his Tables, with an Equation in my Printed Theory to account for them; for if we compound an Equation from the Sun's Anomaly, the Moon's Anomaly, and the Moon from the Sun, or from the Sun's Anomaly, the Apoge from the Sun, and Moon

Moon from the Sun, or from the Sun's Anomaly, Apogee from the Sun and Moon's Anomaly; which, taken any of these Ways, is but the same Equation in Fact; for when any of these two are the same, the other also will be nearly the same; so that having not then as I have inserted in my Theory contracted nor used this Equation, I have referred the farther Improvement of my Theory to the Accomplishment of this Equation, which requires Time and many tiresome Calculations; that having now as it were accomplish'd this Work, and apply'd it only to whole Signs of the Sun's Anomaly, and 10 Degrees of the Moon's Anomaly, and Distance of the Moon from the Sun, my Theory and Tables will not fail of producing the Longitude, within the Limits of the Act as required; as may appear by Examples hereunto annex'd. That by tracing this Equation once, or twice more, and then reducing it to more minute Parts, I shall comprize it within the Limits of my Theory, and discharge the Tables for computing the Moon's Place of four ambiguous Equations of Sir *Isaac Newton's* and the Doctor's: I must own that to make my Theory and Tables more entirely perfect, it is necessary to compute and compare with my Theory, the other Observations the Doctor is Printing, which I have not; and it is also proper to be known the Stars with which the Doctor has compar'd his Observations; for there is some Defect in Mr. *Flamsteed's* Catalogue of Stars, which I have corrected by repeated Observations of my own. Wherefore, I humbly hope, that as the Doctor is paid by the Government for making his Observations, which depend on Mr. *Flamsteed's* Catalogue and mine, I have a Right, on this Occasion, so have Recourse to them.

I shall now give a concise Account of my very great Improvements, as may appear by the Methods I contriv'd, printed and produced to the Parliament when the Act for Discovery of the Longitude was made in the Year 1714. And my Theory of the Moon, as aforesaid, which may be hereunto annex'd, I have, with large Instruments, by repeated Observations, originally corrected and render'd more perfect the Places of the fixed Stars, contriv'd all proper Problems for Practice, taken away the Trouble and Difficulty of computing the Moon's Parallax in Latitude and Longitudes reduced all sexagenary Parts into Decimals, rendering my Tables and the whole System of Astronomy and Navigation more concise and easy for Practice, composed Tables of meridional Parts, whereby I have reduced as it were all the useful Problems in Astronomy and Navigation to one plain right angled Triangle, solving them as it were by one Method. Tables to equate Differences and convert Time into Degrees and Parts of the Equator, and the contrary to minute Parts at one View by Inspection only Tables of the Longitude from the

the right Ascension and Latitude directly, with several other useful and astronomical Tables for Practice, rendering my Theory and Tables with the Construction and Equations of the Orb, and Equations of Time more intelligible, concise and commodious than any other Methods hitherto invented. But the Doctor and his Accomplices do all they can to obvert my very great Improvements by Scandal, Combination, false Reports, and such ridiculous and erroneous Reflections, as are obnoxious to Christianity and civil Society: for the Truth of which, I appeal to those worthy Gentlemen of the Clergy and others that have been both Eye and Ear Witnesses of these corrupt Practices; and that when they have used me thus ill, and aggravated my Resentments at these Proceedings, then theyigmatize me with Passion and other scurrilous Reports, in order to blast my Reputation, and render me obnoxious to those worthy Gentlemen that are, or should be Judges of my Proposals. I appeal to that worthy Gentleman who is President, and other worthy Gentlemen who have been present at the Royal Society and elsewhere, and heard these Debates how ill I have been used, how empty and ridiculous their Arguments, as it were screen'd with sneering and unbecoming Behaviour, being not able in solid Arguments and Disputes to withstand mine.

I shall now only add, That on the 30th of *March* last, Dr. *Habery*, in publick Company, asked me if I would go Abroad in order to settle the Situation of the Sea-Ports, and put in Practice the Ascertaining the *Longitude* at Sea by the Methods aforesaid, and that he would recommend me to the Admiralty for that Purpose, and engage me sufficient Encouragement; to which I was very willing to go and put these Things into Practice, and serve the Publick in all Things that were in my Power, or to this Effect; whereupon the Doctor gave me a Guinea to bind the Bargain, and promis'd me an Answer the next *Thursday*; so that I then waited upon him accordingly, but he then express'd himself after another Manner, as the Gentlemen in Company very well know, but we were better reconcil'd before we parted, and the Doctor promis'd to speak to the Lords of the Admiralty in my Behalf, and desir'd me to come to him again the next *Thursday* for an Answer, being the 13th of *April*, 1732. I met with him at *Child's* Coffee-House, he ask'd me what I had to say, I desir'd to know what he had to say; whereupon his Son, then in Company, insulted me in a very unhandsome and rude Manner. I said, I thought myself a Companion for his Father, but not for him; and then the Doctor and I parted, he being present without interrupting his Son, for this ill Usage, which I think is a sufficient Cause for my Printing this my Case to support my Reputation, &c. and recommend me to the Government, and the Publick

for Protection, Encouragement and Relief; wherefore I humbly hope and pray for a fair Hearing with the Doctor, either before a Committee of Council, or Parliament, the Admiralty Board, or a Meeting of the Commissioners named in the said Act of Parliament, as shall be thought most meet; and am ready and willing to go Abroad and put my Improvements in Practice, settle the Situation of the Sea-Ports, and observe a better Catalogue of the *Southern Stars* than, I believe, can be deduced from the Doctor's former Observations; and am provided with Instruments of my own Contrivance and Making, sufficient to perform all that can be requir'd, either by Sea, or Land, as may appear by my printed Methods, Certificates and Observations hereunto annexed. Wherefore I need none of the Doctor's Recommendations, at this Time, he, *Mr. Flamsteed*, and *Mr. Atkinson*, having done that above 20 Years since, as may also appear by the Board of Admiralty's Report to the late Queen and Council-Board in this Affair, dated the 5th of *March*, 1711. Sign'd by *J. Leake, W. Drake, J. Allabée, G. Clark* and *F. Burchett*, setting forth,

That I had produc'd a Certificate of my Qualifications from one *Atkinson*, a Teacher of the Mathematicks, and was recommended to them by *Mr. Edm. Halley*, as an ingenious Person deserving Encouragement, &c.

That since my writing this my Case, the Transactions for *October, November, and December*, 1731, are presented to my View, which I had not before, wherein is specify'd the Doctor's, Judas-like, Dealings with me, and an Harangue of ambiguous Pretences; my Time will not permit me to answer them effectually at present, which, perhaps, I may hereafter; I shall only now take Notice of some Things as a Specimen of the Whole. The Doctor in Page 190 informs us that,

"Not long after Her late Majesty *Q. Anne* was pleas'd to bestow upon the Publick an Addition of the much greater, and most valuable Part of *Mr. Flamsteed's* Observations, by Help of which the great *Sir Isaac Newton* had form'd his curious Theory of the Moon."

But I cannot understand what the Publick were the better for this Addition? True it is, that when the late *Q. Anne* and Prince *George* gave upwards of 1000 *l.* for Composing, Correcting and Printing a Catalogue of Stars from *Mr. Flamsteed's* Observations, they were deliver'd to *Sir Isaac* seal'd up, and not to be open'd, but by *Mr. Flamsteed's* Consent, for which I saw the Receipt of *Sir Isaac* in *Mr. Flamsteed's* Book, but contrary to that Trust, when they had got the Money, they broke them open, corrected, printed and spoil'd them. I think *Mr. Flamsteed* had only 150 *l.* of the Money, as he told me, (and so the Doctor, at best, designs to serve me,)

me) wherefore this Addition, when Printed, was so erroneous, that some were burnt, and the Rest, in fact, destroy'd, to prevent the Publick being impos'd on by it; and Mr. *Flamsteed* after that corrected and printed them at his own Cost, as may appear by his Works.

Again, Page 191, The Doctor, specifying Sir *Isaac's* Industry in settling the Epoches and other Elements of the Lunar Astronomy, alleges, That where the Errors were found greater than 2 Minutes, it was in the 3d and 4th Quarters of the Moon's Age. True it is, that the Difference betwixt Mr. *Flamsteed's* old Lunar Epoches in Sir *Jonas Moor's* and Sir *Isaac's*, 1701, is in the Moon's mean Motion $2' 16''$ in the Apoge $18' 54''$ and of the Nods $0' 59''$ and for 20 Years Motion $11' 15''$ and 2 Seconds.

But the Difference betwixt Sir *Isaac's* Equation of the Moon's Apoge, or Anomaly and mine near the Syzygias of the Sun's Anomaly is $41' 20''$ above double the Difference betwixt Sir *Isaac's* Epoches and Mr. *Flamsteed's*; and it is well known, that Mr. *Flamsteed* had corrected his Lunar Tables by his more perfect Observations, to as great Perfection as Sir *Isaac's*; but knowing that would not do, he did not publish them, and was then too far advanced in Years to accomplish that Work.

But that Sir *Isaac's* would not err more than two Minutes, but in the 3d and 4th Quarters is not true, as may appear from the 4 Examples; I imparted to the Doctor of his own Observing, as well as mine, to try the Error of Sir *Isaac's* Theory and his Tables before he printed this; which, for Brevity, I shall only now insert as follow, viz. 1729, June the 24th 7 h. 10 m. $33''$ P M apparent Time upon the Meridian, Sir *Isaac* errs $6' 20''$ the 25th 8 h. 7 m. $37' 6'' 30''$ the 26th 9 h. 09 m. $34'' 6' 40''$ and the 28th 11 h. 19 m. $34''$ P M $5' 10''$ and I suspect the Tables the Doctor is about to publish nearly the same, which will produce an Error of about 170 Miles in the Longitude at Sea, which I think is a Proof of the Doctor's ambiguous Pretences.

I shall now proceed to shew what my Theory and Tables will perform, which I shall, if encourag'd, improve to greater Perfection, by rectifying my last and general Equation specify'd in my printed Theory. That notwithstanding the Difference betwixt Mr. *Flamsteed's* Catalogue and mine, which is in some Stars about one Minute, but by his Observations nearly the same; the Error produced in about 800 Observations of Mr. *Flamsteed's* and my own will not exceed above 60 Miles, and not frequently above 30 Miles in the Longitude at the Equator, unless where the Defects are in the Observation, which is not many, and those I shall rectify where they can be compar'd with proper Stars.

That finding myself under a fatal Necessity, as may appear by the following Certificate, which I have to produce, of Mr. Flamsteed's own Writing, viz.

London, Sept. 19th, 1711.

Mr. Browne,

I Cannot in justice any longer forbear Testifying for you, That I have known you this five Years, and that I have ever found you of a sober Life and Conversation; that you have improved yourself very much since our first Acquaintance, and rendered yourself skillful, both in Trigonometry, plain and spherical, and the Astronomy, both of the Sphere and Orbs; and that being us'd to a Mechanical Employment, you may be a very serviceable Person Aboard her Majesty's Navy, in which you desire to serve; I pray God bless you with Success in your best Endeavours, and am

Sir, Yours,

For M. Robert Browne
of Wapping.

John Flamsteed, M. R.

Wherefore, I most humbly pray, That a Stop may be put to that unjust Prejudice carried on against me, for above twenty Years, at the Admiralty; and whereby the Doctor is now encouraged in these Proceedings, to deprive and defraud me of my just Encouragement and Reward; that I may be relieved and encouraged as the Nature of my Case requires, and shall be thought most meet, &c.

And that I may be reliev'd according to the Prayer of my Petition, I most humbly appeal to the Words of the said Act of Parliament, passed in the 12th of Q. Anne, as follows.

That such a Discovery would be of particular Advantage to the Trade of Great Britain, and that no such Invention, or Proposals hitherto made had then been brought to Perfection; wherefore Commissioners are named and constituted to examine, try, and judge of all Proposals, Experiments and Improvements relating to the same, and to hear and receive any Proposals that shall be made to them, and when satisfy'd of the Probability of any such Discovery, to make out a Bill for any Sum of Money, not exceeding 2000 l. for making Experiments.

That in Performance of this, I allege, That my Tables made from my printed Theory, and propos'd as the Act directs, will infallably compute the Moon's true Place, within the Limits of the said Act; and that no Theory, or Tables, has been hitherto publish'd, or propos'd comparable with mine.

That I have long since produc'd to the Royal Society, and propos'd my Sextant, compos'd of two Telescopes joyn'd together to
one

and Eye-piece for taking any Angle: at one View, to great Exactness, the one turning upon Swivels, keeping its Position, and the other travels, and forthwith catches the other Object. When this cannot be used, I produced Arches from 3 Foot to 9 Foot Radius, with 2 sliding Vanes for taking Angles with the bare Eye to very great Exactness; and likewise with a Telescope and Plummet of 7 Pound Weight fixed with Plates, or in a Groove to prevent its Vibration; whereby at all Times, when the Stars are conspicuous, and any other Instrument can be used to observe the Latitude at Sea, and consequently the minute Parts of the Equator upon the Meridian; the Apperture 2 Degrees to 5 Foot Radius with a brass sliding Scale apply'd to the Focus, as it were perfectly measuring the Distance, Elevation, and Difference of Azimuth betwixt the Moon's Limb and any Star, whereby the Longitude at Sea will be frequently ascertain'd by my Method and Problems proposed, printed, and laid before the Parliament when the said Act was made in 1714, with Mr. Flamsteed's Certificate to the South-Sea Company, under written by Dr. Halley and Mr. Atkinson, in fact as follows.

That I had made with my own Hands Instruments for observing the Latitude, and contriv'd Methods for finding the Longitude at Sea by Celestial Observations.

I Have known Mr. Browne these Six Years, and believe the Assertion of his, &c. to be true.

John Flamsteed, M. R. S.

I Believe the Petitioner may be very serviceable in settling and ascertaining the true Situation of the Coast of the South Seas.

Edm. Halley.

I Know Mr. Browne, the Petitioner, so well qualified in the Mathematics, which renders him capable to improve Navigation by settling the Latitude, Longitude, &c. of Places.

James Atkinson, Sen. Teacher of the Mathematics.

And whereas it is express'd in the said Act, That the first Author, &c. of such Method shall be entituled to, and have such Reward as is therein mentioned; and whereas all other Methods hitherto proposed have proved ineffectual, and the Doctor's being the same and depending on mine so long and so many Times offer'd to the Publick; I do with humble Submission make my publick Claim to the Reward as aforesaid, independent on all others, and humbly hope the same Equity will be granted to this Act of Parliament as to others.

Witness,

April 1734. ROBERT BROWNE.